

Comprehension Check Questions
for Act Four of

THE CRUCIBLE

by Arthur Miller

From *The Crucible Literature Guide* Developed by Kristen Bowers
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Item No. 29529CCK-004

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The Crucible

Comprehension Check Questions

Act Four

1. What is Reverend Hale doing at the jailhouse?
2. What is happening to the farms and animals in the town of Salem? Why do you think this is happening?
3. What has happened to Abigail and Mercy Lewis?
4. What happened in the town of Andover? Why is Parris afraid of this news?
5. What does Parris suggest to Danforth? Why does he make this suggestion?
6. What other indications does Hale give that the town is falling apart?
7. What does Hale mean when he says, "There is blood on my head! Can you not see the blood on my head"?
8. Why does Danforth refuse to postpone the executions?
9. How long has passed since the trials first began?
10. What do Hale and Danforth beg Elizabeth to do? Why?
11. What does Elizabeth say happened to Giles Corey?
12. What has Proctor been contemplating doing? What is Elizabeth's response to this?
13. What do Danforth and Parris plan to do with Proctor's confession?
14. Why does Proctor refuse to sign the confession?
15. What does he do with the confession, and what happens to him as a result?
16. What does Elizabeth mean by: "He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him"?
17. What lessons do you think Arthur Miller wanted readers and audiences to learn from his play? What do you think are the most important themes of the play?
18. Do you think the story would have been as effective as a novel rather than a play? Why or why not? Why do you think Miller decided to tell the story of the Salem Witch Trials as a play rather than a novel?

Answer Key

Act Four Comprehension Check

1. praying with them and trying to get the convicted to confess
2. Cows are wandering the streets because they have no owners to take care of them.
3. They stole Parris's money and ran away.
4. The rioted against the executions; he is afraid the people of Salem will riot.
5. that they postpone the executions; he fears his own life and retaliation against him
6. Children are orphaned and wandering from house to house looking for food.
7. He feels he is responsible for the executions because he was the supposed expert and did not stop all the executions.
8. He doesn't want to appear weak.
9. 3 months
10. to get John to confess; they can't get him to, so they are hoping Elizabeth will make him change his mind
11. He was pressed to death.
12. confessing; that it is not her place to judge his decisions
13. post the written confession on the church doors
14. He thinks his verbal confession is enough; he doesn't want his name to be shamed in the town.
15. He tears it up, and is then taken to be executed.
16. that John did the right thing; he didn't confess to something he didn't do, so he has his pride and good name still, and no one can take that away from him
17. *Answers will vary; accept all reasonably supported responses.*
18. *Answers will vary; accept all reasonably supported responses.*